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AKTIVITÄT

KRAFTWERK FANZINE

This document contains the scanned pages of one of the Kraftwerk Aktivität Fanzines or complimentary publications that were produced from 1992 through to 1998.

During this time 10 Fanzines were published along with various update issues and other complimentary publications.

The scans have only been altered for clarity, with the exception of addresses and phone numbers that have now been blocked out. So please note that all errors and miss-information are as they appeared at the time of publication. Later issues tried to address the earlier problems as the production team put more stringent editorial practices in place.

AKTIVITÄT ONLINE

At long last an online version of Aktivität fanzine is available. Since July of this year I have been placing some of the articles from past issues of the fanzine on the www. In most cases the articles are revised and updated to correct inaccuracies and mistakes and incorporate extra information that was unavailable at the time of the original articles publication. Additionally, extra images not published in issues of the fanzine will be used, since there is more scope for the use of colour imagery on the web. If you have access to the www then you should point your browser at the following URL; <http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/aktivitaet/>

It also signifies that this will be the final paper-based Activity Update sheet. The 8-edition subscription period is now complete with the mail-out of this Update, though I so intend to periodically post news similar in nature to these digests on the Aktivität web pages.

THE LATEST KRAFTWERK LIVE ACTIVITY

Kraftwerk played various venues in Japan and the USA, as well as one-off concerts in Spain and Denmark in June, the dates and venues of which were listed in Aktivität issue 10. Additionally, it has recently been reported that Kraftwerk will also appear live in Brazil in October as part of the Free Jazz Festival 98, the dates being 16th October 1998 - Rio de Janeiro - Museum of Modern Art (MAM) and 17th October 1998 - Sao Paulo - Joquei Club. A date in Argentina on 12th October at the Obras Sanitarias Stadium in Buenos Aires is also scheduled. Live activity in Australia in January of next year has also been confirmed while further possible dates in the USA and in Japan were suggested by Ralf Hütter.

This has easily been Kraftwerk's most intensive bout of live activity since 1991 and the UK and European tours for the release of 'The Mix'. One of the US concerts had to be cancelled however - the date in Washington DC on the 14th of June as part of the 'Tibetan Freedom Festival' was subject to drastic rearrangement due to the severe weather which struck on the Saturday - Kraftwerk pulled out of the their appearance altogether that was scheduled for the Sunday.

In terms of the actual shows, they were very similar to those from the tail-end of last year in Austria and Germany - the play list for the concerts being almost identical save for the fact that one of the new Kraftwerk tracks aired at the German and Austrian concerts last year was dropped and also witnessing a reinstated 'The Model'. Therefore the track listing for this tour consisted of the following:

Numbers, Computer World, Home Computer, The Man Machine, Tour De France, Autobahn, The Model, Airwaves (Tango), Sellafield 2/Radioactivity, Trans-Europe Express, Pocket Calculator/Dentaku, The Robots/Robotronik, Tribal, Music Non Stop. NB; (Tango) and Tribal are the new pieces of music.

As ever, some of the nights saw some 'technical difficulties', such as the second night in Tokyo where a breakdown during numbers prompted Kraftwerk to start afresh from their electronic voice

intro once again. A publicity photo session involving the Kraftwerk robots also took place on the sidewalk outside the State Theatre in Detroit, as witnessed (and also photographed) by fans. Brief excerpts from the Roskilde Festival of Kraftwerk performing 'The Robots' have been aired on MTV while a complete airing of 'Tribal' and most of 'Music Non Stop' from one of the Tokyo concerts have been viewed on a recent Japanese Kraftwerk special on Japanese MTV, along with various promo clips. A brief excerpt of 'The Man Machine' has also been aired on Spanish TV. Amazingly, Ralf Hütter also spoke with the press and the first new interviews since 1993 were printed, though little if anything new was forthcoming. Coinciding with the live dates in Japan, Toshiba EMI reissued some Kraftwerk CDs on May 27th; 'Autobahn' (TOCP-50578), 'Radio-Activity' (TOCP-50579), 'Electric Café' (TOCP-50580), and 'The Mix' (TOCP-50581).

'CONCERT CLASSICS'

Unless you haven't set foot in a record shop for several months you will no doubt have come across a copy of the 'Concert Classics' (Ranchlife, CRANCH4, CD - also available on vinyl) release by now. Quite a curiosity - looks like a bootleg, but seemingly legitimate - how else could it be stocked in 'regular' stores in such quantities. It appears to be licenced from EMI records, though it surely has no official clearance from Kraftwerk themselves - the quality of the packaging design and sleeve notes is shoddy at best and inaccurate while the track listing is also wrong. In a similar 'no mans land' to the Germanofon releases perhaps - though those are clearly bootlegs, mastered from vinyl copies of the LPs.

Enough of the politics, what of the music? Well, this release is well worth getting hold of. A good quality, full stereo sound-board recording of a 1975-era concert is what 'Concert Classics' consists of. The packaging does not give details of the concert venue, though the recording originates from a concert in Dallas, 1975, according to a recent Japanese press release. The correct track listing is in fact thus; 'Kometenmelodie' 1 and 2 (11:49), 'Autobahn' (21:54), 'Kling Klang' (10:10) and 'Tanz Musik' (4:16). (On the sleeve packaging the track listing is instead given as 'Kometenmelodie', 'Autobahn', 'Morgenspaziergang 1' and 'Morgenspaziergang 2'). As Ralf Hütter can be heard introducing both 'Kling Klang' and 'Tanz Musik' it's perplexing as to how the track listing can be so inaccurate. (There are also quite a few pieces of dialogue in German that can be heard, particularly when a part when one of the electronic percussion devices breaks down - these all add a certain interesting charm to the recording.) Being a live recording it is inevitably a bit rough in places, even though it's clearly from a mixing desk recording. The stereo mix gives a clear picture of the instrumentation - and the unmistakable sound of vibes reveals the presence of Karl Bartos (the sleeve packaging wrongly states Klaus Roeder on guitar and violin).

As for the performances themselves, 'Kometenmelodie 1' features the taped extract from 'Faust' (as discussed in the 'Live Tapes - The Autobahn Era' article from Aktivität 7, please see there for more details) as well as the eerie choral sounds first introduced on the 'Radio-Activity' album too. 'Autobahn' also sees elements of these sounds too. 'Kling Klang' bears only its title in common with that track from the 'Kraftwerk 2' LP - this is in fact a unique piece of music that Kraftwerk featured in their 1974-1975 live set. Worth tracking down this CD for this one track alone really, apart from live bootleg tapes you won't find it anywhere else. The final track, which is faded out thereby editing it slightly, is a rather laid-back version of 'Tanz Musik'. The vibes, heard on most of the material on this CD really make their presence felt on this track.

As a historical snapshot of Kraftwerk circa 1975 this CD is invaluable; even at this late point (remember, this is post-'Autobahn') the Kraftwerk live instrumentation is predominantly some synths, electric piano, organ, vibes, flute and electronic percussion. Coupled with the fact that this CD seems to be selling in the £6.99-£9.99 budget price range, it is well worth picking up if you have an inkling for the less synthesized/sequenced, more free-form feel of early Kraftwerk. Of note, the vinyl pressing has a different running order to that of the CD, with 'Autobahn' on one side and the other three tracks on the other. Also, a Japanese CD edition by the name of 'Autobahn Tour '75' (CRCL-4035) is due for release in September.

NEW KRAFTWERK BIOGRAPHY

A new biography on Kraftwerk has now been published by Ebury Press. Titled 'Kraftwerk: From Düsseldorf To The Future (With Love)', the author is Tim Barr, the current editor of 'Future Music'.

KRAFTWERK ON DANISH TV SPECIAL

The Danish TV station DR2 broadcast a Kraftwerk special earlier this year as part of their 'Okay Tone' series, featuring new interview material with both Karl Bartos and Wolfgang Flür reminiscing on their days with Kraftwerk. As well as showing some of the standard Kraftwerk promo videos (as well as material from Elektric Music (including a brief clip of a different version of the 'TV' promo from the two examples already viewed in the past) and Yamo) there was also the video for the new Kraftwerk song first aired at last year's 'Tribal Gathering' event (also to be found on the bands website). Additionally, some archive footage (supplied by Wolfgang Flür as seen originally in his Yamo electronic press kit) of Kraftwerk in New York from 1975 was also shown.

NEW BOOTLEG RELEASES

'Lauschangriff' is the title of a double live bootleg CD which features the 1991 Düsseldorf concert plus some additional official tracks as follows; Radio-Activity (1976 Single Edit), Showroom Dummies (1977 Single Edit), Trans Europa Express (Single Edit), Tour de France (Remix Single Edit), Numbers (Remix, 1982), Musique Non Stop (12" Version), Der Telefon Anruf (7" Version), Tour de France (Instrumental), Kometenmelodie 2 (1975 Single Version), Autobahn (1981 Single Version), Kohoutek 1, Autobahn (1975 Single Version), Radioactivity (William Orbit 7" Remix), Robotronik (7" Version), The Telephone Call (7" Version) plus one unofficial mix; Die Roboter (Kinderspiel-Version).

'Computersinfonien' is a double CD on the Tuff Bites label with the 1997 ZKM show with four additional DJ remix tracks - the sound quality of the ZKM portion is good though the very start is absent, the same source as used on the previous 'Return of the Mensch Maschine' bootleg from the start of this year. 'Techno' on the T-REX label (TRCD 065/66) also features the ZKM concert.

'Dentaku World' is a new repackaging of the 7/9/81 Tokyo, Japan concert recording released previously on CDs such as 'Numbers', 'Virtu Ex Machina', 'Nippon Numbers' and the like.

TRIBUTE RELEASES

Following on in the increasingly crowded market for Kraftwerk cover version 'tribute' compilations is Basskraft: A Tribute To Kraftwerk (Track Listing; Trans-Europe Express, The Robots, Computer World, Pocket Calculator, Numbers, Computer Love, Home Computer, It's More Fun To Compute, The Beat, A Digital World, Musique Non-Stop, Tour De France, Autobahn), released in early August. A similar compilation hailing from Japan is apparently scheduled for September release.

A retrospective CD with material of El Aviador Dro y Sus Obreros Especializados (pioneer band of techno in Spain) will be released in September 21st by Lollipop. All the material was recorded in the period 1979-1981 and will include a studio version of 'La Modelo', a cover of 'The Model' with lyrics in Spanish, recorded in 1979. This could easily be the oldest recorded cover of 'The Model', which El Aviador Dro have always played live at their concerts since 1979.

A live version of Aviador Dro's 'La Modelo', recorded in 1994, is available on: CD: Cyberiaada, Lollipop LOL CD 085, Jul. 1997 – CD single: Néstor el Cyborg, Lollipop LOL MX 087, Sep 1997. For more information about El Aviador Dro: <http://www.arrakis.es/~jgc/aviador.htm>

"Tribute to Kraftwerk" by Marc et Claude is another recent tribute release, available on CD single and 12" formats.

KARL BARTOS

Early June saw the release on SPV in Germany of the new 'Electric Music' album (SPV CD 085-61932). A single from the album, 'Call on Me', has also been released, while 'Sunshine' is currently scheduled to be the second single release. This album sees a very different sound from Elektrik Music and 'Esperanto', with a heavy reliance on guitars, which makes for an overall sound not a million miles away from New Order and Electronic. To help promote the album, Bartos appeared at various WOM record stores in Germany for autograph sessions. A Japanese release of the album is scheduled for September, which is said to contain an additional bonus track. News is that Bartos may perform live later this year as Elektrik Music and incorporate some Kraftwerk material in the live set too.

Strangely, Karl Bartos has recently released his own Kraftwerk cover version! 'Tour de France - 21 Racing Tracks' is a various artists CD which features a new version of 'Tour de France' (named 'Tour De France 98') by Karl Bartos ('ex-Kraftwerk member' as stated on the sleeve design). Issued by Warners in Germany.

Karl Bartos has been involved with an act called Superior, principally through his remix of their single called 'Coma'. A number of editions exist of this release - largely promos, though it is stated that it has now been officially released in Germany. The 12" single remix is titled the 'Komatrix Mix' while the CD-R promo version contains an edit of this mix on the 'Kraftwrk.MOV' video clip.

YAMO

Quite quiet on the Yamo front really, though the June issue of the UK music magazine 'Future Music' contained an interview with Wolfgang Flür in which he talks extensively of his time with Kraftwerk. Included in this are some previously unpublished photos of Kraftwerk from earlier times, including shots of a live appearance by the three-piece line up of Hütter, Schneider and Flür from a 1973 German television 'Aspekte'. Additionally, there is a shot of a 1976 Kraftwerk soundcheck displaying the 'optically-triggered drum cage' electronic percussion unit in its weird and wonderful glory. As if all this weren't enough, the accompanying free CD also comes complete with samples from the Yamo song 'Mosquito' with the open invitation for readers and fans to sample these snippets and remix the song into a new format. A future issue of the magazine will air some of the winning entries in this remix competition. The interview itself reveals that Wolfgang has a working title of 'Serenity Supreme' for the next album by Yamo. □